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Press release from Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Proposal for a national reporting and follow-up system for abducted children and adults

Published 12 March 2024

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been tasked with sharing knowledge about honour-based violence and oppression in connection with stays abroad. The Government has now also tasked the Agency with analyzing and presenting proposals for a national reporting and follow-up system for cases where a child or adult has been taken abroad. This involves determining the scope of the problem and establishing an approach to systematic follow-up.

"It is incredibly important that we have forceful legislation in place to prevent children and adults being taken abroad against their will. The Government therefore recently proposed an expanded travel ban for children who are at risk of being taken abroad for purposes such as raising them in their parents' home country. In cases where people are nevertheless taken abroad, we see a major need for better follow-up on these cases," says Minister for Gender Equality and Working Life Paulina Brandberg.

"Far too many children and adults are being taken abroad against their will. That's why we're taking action, and tasking the Swedish Gender Equality Agency with investigating how to handle and follow up abduction cases," says Minister for Social Services Camilla Waltersson Grönvall.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency's new commission concerning harmful stays abroad and honour-based violence and oppression is given in consideration of the lack of systematic reporting and follow-up on how many children and adults are taken abroad each year. A clearer picture of the scope of the problem is required to implement the right measures.

Within the scope of the Agency's current assignment to share knowledge about honour-based oppression and other forms of violence related to stays abroad, it has become apparent that many children and young people are being exposed to systematic violence over a long period. While this is taking place, government agencies and municipalities are often already aware of the victims' vulnerability or risk prior to an abduction. This is an indication of institutional shortcomings that require investigation and remediation.

For this reason, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency has now been tasked with investigating potential solutions for a reporting system so as to gain a better overview of the problem's scope and proposing how these cases should be handled and followed up. The aim is for government agencies and municipalities to be able to take the right measures to prevent children and young people being taken abroad and to provide them with adequate support.

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